

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 PANAMA 02793 132102Z

12

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 SIL-01 LAB-04 EB-07 /073 W

----- 128338

R 131937Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3872

INFO GOV PAN CANAL

USCNINCSO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PANAMA 2793

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PN, PQ

SUBJ: PRESS REACTS TO U.S. CIVIC COUNCIL STATEMENT

SUMMARY: TESTIMONY OF CANAL ZONE U.S. CIVIC COUNCILS BEFORE METCALFE SUBCOMMITTEE -- AND RELATED ACTIVITIES OF THE U.S. EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONS-HAS BEEN SUBJECT OF EXTENSIVE PRESS ATTENTION OVER PAST FEW DAYS. IN ITS REPORTING AND COMMENTARY, PRESS HAS TENDED IN GENERAL TO RIDICULE "AONIAN" FEARS AND ACCUSATIONS AS EXPRESSED IN STATEMENT TO SUBCOMMITTEE. PRESS REPORTED A NEGATIVE REACTION AMONG PANAMANIAN CANAL EMPLOYEES TO ZONIAN CAMPAIGN AND, IN MATUTINO MAY 13, SPECIFICALLY CHARGED THAT GOP'S DOMESTIC OPPONENTS ARE IN LEAGUE WITH CIVIC COUNCILS. END SUMMARY

1. CANAL ZONE U.S. CIVIC COUNCIL SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT TO METCALFE SUBCOMMITTEE HAS PROMPTED SPATE OF CRITICAL LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE AND COMMENTARY. ALTHOUGH PORTIONS OF TESTIMONY HAD BEEN REPORTED PREVIOUSLY -- AND INTERVIEW WITH SPOKESMAN PUBLISHED EARLIER IN LA ESTRELLA AND STAR & HERALD -- FULL TEXT OF TESTIMONY WAS FIRST PRINTED LOCALLY MAY 9.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 PANAMA 02793 132102Z

THE MAY 11 EL PANAMA AMERICA (DOMINICAL) DEVOTED ITS

FEATURE HEADLINE TO STORY , BY-PASSING EVEN OAS DEVELOPMENTS, AND CRITICA CARRIED LEAD ARTICLES ON SUBJECT IN ITS MAY 10 AND 12 EDITIONS. EDITORIALS FOLLOWED IN CRITICA (LEAD EDITORIAL, REFLEXIONES MATUTINA AND JUAN CARRETA) AND MATUTINO (URRACA) ON MAY 13.

2. PRINCIPAL THRUST OF REPORTING HAS BEEN TO RIDICULE ZONIANS' FEARS AND ACCUSATIONS; CRITICA MAY 10 ATTRIBUTED THEM TO CONCERN THAT THE "ARTIFICIAL PARADISE" IN WHICH THE U.S. EMPLOYEES NOW LIVE WOULD BE LOST. DOMINICAL (MAY 11) AND CRITICA (MAY 12) FOCUSED ON U.S. CIVIC COUNCILS' ATTEMPTS TO ENLIST PANAMANIAN EMPLOYEES OF WEST INDIAN ORIGIN IN COMMON CAUSE AGAINST PANAMA'S JURISDICTIONAL ASPIRATIONS. PAPERS REPORTED NEGATIVE PANAMANIAN COMMUNITY REACTION TO U.S. COUNCILS' "ABSURD PRETENSIONS" AND, WITH RESPECT TO EFFORTS TO RECRUIT WEST INDIAN ALLIES, CRITICA DISMISSED TACTIC WITH OBSERVATION THAT BLACK EMPLOYEES HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN THAT THEY HAVE FORMERLY BEEN "REGARDED AND TREATED AS SLAVES." EL PANAMA AMERICA STATED IT HAD LEARNED THAT PANAMANIAN ZONE RESIDENTS ARE "EXPECTING" HERMELINDA FUENTES (A ASSEMBLY OF COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES MEMBER FROM CANAL ZONE) TO DENOUNCE ACTIVITIES OF U.S. CIVIC COUNCILS, WHILE STILL OTHERS HAVE "ASKED" HER TO ORGANIZE COMMITTEES IN SUPPORT OF PANAMA'S JURISDICTIONAL ASPIRATIONS (TO DATE WITHOUT A RESPONSE).

3. EL PANAMA AMERICA, IN ITS MAY 11 ARTICLE, CHARACTERIZED THE CIVIC COUNCILS' ACTIONS AS A VIOLATION OF PANAMANIAN AND INTERNATIONAL LAW AND AS "NEOCOLONIALISM" EMBELLISHED WITH "MOTIVES THAT DO NOT EXIST AND ARGUMENTS THAT CANNOT BE ACCEPTED BY A NATION RICH IN TRADITIONS OF RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND THAT IS THE SELF-PROCLAIMED CHAMPION IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE LIBERTIES OF MAN." INTERESTINGLY, CRITICA CONCLUDED ITS MAY 12 ARTICLE WITH THE OBSERVATION THAT, WHILE ZONIANS ARE OBSESSED WITH WHERE THEY WILL GO IN THE U.S. IF A NEW TREATY IS SIGNED, NO ONE IN PANAMA HAD THOUGHT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 PANAMA 02793 132102Z

THEY WOULD HAVE TO FLEE. "THEY CAN REMAIN WORKING," SAID CRITICA, "UNDER THE SAME CONDITIONS AS PANAMANIAN."

4. EDITORIAL COMMENT IN CRITICA MAY 13 DEVELOPED SIMILAR THEMES, WITH LEAD EDITORIAL REMINDING CANAL EMPLOYEES THAT WITH GOP, NOT WITH ZONIANS, PANAMANIAN CANAL EMPLOYEES HAD TRUE CHAMPION AND CALLED ON PANAMANIAN ZONE LABOR GROUPS TO REJECT CIVIL COUNCILS' OVERTURES.

MATUTINO'S MAY 13 URRACA COLUMN (A SPOKESMAN FOR GOP POSITION) CHARGED THAT TESTIMONY BEFORE SUBCOMMITTEE REVEALED THAT DOMESTIC OPPONENTS OF GOP WERE WORKING WITH CIVIC COUNCILS. CITING COUNCILS' REFERENCE TO SUPPRESSION OF OPPOSITION PAPER (LA OPINION PUBLICA, PANAMA HERRERA AND USE OF "SAME LANGUAGE AS IMPUTERS OF THE PRESENT REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT," URRACA OBSERVED THAT FACTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. ASKING RHETORICALLY WHY OPPOSITION GROUPS, WHO CLAIM TO BE TRUE PATRIOTS, DID NOT DENOUNCE ZONIAN'S ACTIONS, URRACA ANSWERED THAT IN THEIR DESIRE TO DESTROY THE REVOLUTION THEY WERE EVEN PREPARED TO TAKE COMMON CAUSE WITH ZONIANS.

5. COMMENT: PUBLICATION OF FULL TEXT OF U.S. CIVIC COUNCIL STATEMENT, AT SOME INTERVAL FOLLOWING ITS ORIGINAL PRESENTATION, WAS SIGNAL THAT GOP HAD DECIDED NOT TO LET IT PASS. GIVEN REFERENCE TO VIOLATION OF LAW -- AND ALLEGATION OF ALLIANCE BETWEEN DOMESTIC GOP OPPONENTS AND CIVIC COUNCILS -- IT WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING IF PANAMANIAN FOLLOW-UP WITH MORE FORMAL PROTEST OVER "POLITICAL" ACTIVITIES BY U.S. CANAL EMPLOYEES. SIMILARLY, AN EFFORT BY PANAMANIAN CANAL EMPLOYEES AND LABOR GROUPS TO VIGOROUSLY OPPOSE U.S. CIVIC COUNCILS' MAY RECEIVE MORE GOP ENCOURAGEMENT. WHILE ATTITUDES OF U.S. EMPLOYEE GROUPS WERE NOT A SURPRISE TO GOP, ANY SERIOUS EFFORT TO TURN PANAMANIAN EMPLOYEES AGAINST NEW TREATY IS A MOST SENSITIVE ISSUE FOR PANAMA.
JORDEN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, PERSONNEL, INTERNATIONAL CANALS, US CONGRESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS, ANTIAMERICAN FEELING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PANAMA02793
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750168-1008
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750557/aaaabzsm.tel
Line Count: 144
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 SEP 2003 by SmithRJ>; APPROVED <16 OCT 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS REACTS TO U.S. CIVIC COUNCIL STATEMENT SUMMARY: TESTIMONY OF CANAL ZONE U.S. CIVIC COUNCILS
TAGS: PFOR, PN, PQ, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006